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Georgia Southern University Students Learning to Lead

JULY 22, 2009



While many students are doing a variety of internships this summer, six Georgia Southern University students are participating in a unique internship program that combines hands-on experience with leadership.

Offered by the Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement, the Leadership Interns Program enables students to utilize and hone

their leadership skills in a "real world" setting. The program is open to students in any major, and the leadership interns may also be eligible to earn academic credit.

Leadership intern students experience an intensive 12-week program in a corporate, non-profit or governmental agency, in which they may be assigned special projects or participate in the day-to-day operations of the organization.

What makes the program unique is that leadership interns are guaranteed a minimum of five hours per week of formal leadership mentoring with the organization's leaders. Seeing leadership in action helps prepare the students to step into leadership roles in their communities and careers; in turn, at the end of the internship, the students provide the organization with five ideas to improve its service, work flow, etc.

Three students, Ally Rakoczy, Danielle Rydzewski and Angela Kamson, are interning with Huddle, Inc., a marketing firm in Duluth, Ga., with several national clients. Blake Thompson is interning at oXYGen Financial, Inc., a personal finance company in Alpharetta, Ga., Daniel Vinson is interning with Cumberland Island National Seashore in St. Mary's, Ga., and Allison Beasley is with Habitat for Humanity in Statesboro.

'We've gotten so many opportunities to really see how things are done here by sitting in on, and participating in, company meetings and conference calls with clients. They really expect you to be able to formulate some dynamic ideas and actively participate in meetings,' Rakoczy said.

Rakoczy has certainly made her mark during her internship. Brought in by senior executives to help develop a marketing strategy for one of Huddle's clients, Valvoline, Rakoczy drew on the information she learned in class and presented a market research plan that showed ways Valvoline could save an estimated \$300,000 annually on their mailings and information distribution.

'In the current economy, this is the kind of leadership that all organizations need,' said Philip Bruce, coordinator of the Leadership Interns Program. 'Obviously, Huddle was very pleased with Ally's suggestions and research skills and has begun implementing her strategy in Tennessee and Georgia.

Should these two states produce the anticipated results, then her plan will be implemented nationwide.”

‘It has been really exciting to see the ideas we put out there come to fruition and make an impact on the overall program,” Rakoczy said. ‘They have given us a good deal of responsibility, and even though they’re there to help us if we need it, they also have taken steps back to allow us to really do our best to handle what we’re given.”

To apply for a Leadership Internship position or to learn more about the program, contact Philip Bruce in the Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement at 912-478-1435 or visit the website <http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/leadership/internship>.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers 115 degree programs serving nearly 18,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of Georgia’s largest, is a top choice of Georgia’s HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu.

Summer 2009 Leadership Interns

Huddle, Inc.

Ally Rakoczy, Marketing/Sales and Sales Management major

Danielle Rydzewski, Marketing/Public Relations major

Angela Kamson, Marketing/Sales and Sales Management major

oXYGen Financial, Inc.

Blake Thompson Finance/Financial Planning major

Cumberland Island National Seashore

Daniel Vinson, Information Systems/Technology Entrepreneurship major

Habitat for Humanity

Allison Beasley, Political Science major, Geography and Regional Economic Development minor